Freedom:
The Philosophy of Liberation

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Freedom: The Philosophy of Liberation

Scope:

Of the ideas that have inspired mankind throughout the ages, freedom is perhaps the most powerful. For many people, the United States of America embodies the many facets of freedom. The idea of freedom has had great influence in Americans' political and private decisions. It is not, however, coextensive with the history of the United States; liberation has long been the subject of learned thought, stretching as far back as the time of Plato, and as far away as ancient India. This lecture is a guided tour of the byways of the philosophy of liberation, beginning with its ancient roots and ending in twentieth-century America.

Lecture One describes the most ancient roots of the philosophy of freedom, in the republic of Athens, Hindu holy works, and Christian tradition. Lecture Two demonstrates how the ancient philosophers clearly influenced the first modern philosophies of freedom, as epitomized by John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Locke maintained a focus on political liberty, and Rousseau laid the groundwork for the philosophy of equality that inspired the French revolution.

Lectures Three and Four contrast two great minds of the nineteenth century, G.W.F. Hegel and John Stuart Mill. Hegel's philosophy of freedom is difficult to recognize as dealing with the same subject as Mill's. While Hegel sees the ultimate freedom for the individual as coming from his membership in and obedience to a great state, Mill takes a now traditionally American view that freedom for the individual must include freedom from the "tyranny of the majority," especially in matters of opinion or conscience.

Lectures Five through Eight deal with four great proponents of freedom in the twentieth century: Emma Goldman, Mahatma Gandhi, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King, Jr. A vivid demonstration of the fact that nobody can claim a monopoly on freedom, these great people and their widely varying conceptions of freedom come alive in these last four lectures. Emma Goldman's anarchist beliefs and faith in the innate goodness of human nature contrast starkly with the often violent, racist beliefs of Nation of Islam leader Malcolm X. Malcolm's later philosophies bear a striking resemblance to those of the revered Gandhi, who may be called one of the most creative thinkers and successful political leaders of our time. Gandhi's ideas on political freedom through personal liberation and nonviolent civil disobedience directly influenced Martin Luther King, Jr., who is the subject of the final lecture. King's legacy of respect for a higher morality in the face of degrading injustice is a lasting philosophy of liberation on two fronts, which presents the next challenge for the United States and the world as we strive to be free, together.

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Lecture One
Freedom in the Ancient World

Scope: Freedom is an idea cherished and defended by Americans as integral to our culture and as a principle of immense value to our national identity. The philosophy of freedom, however, is not an American product but one that has its roots in diverse ancient cultures. This lecture explores the ancient Hindu philosophy of dual freedom as described in the Bhagavad Gita, and Greek philosopher Plato's study of freedom in the republic of Athens. Christian philosophy of course made a major contribution to the ideal of freedom, and the three are compared and contrasted.

Outline

I. This series of lectures is about the idea of freedom and the men and women and speeches that expound it.

- **A.** Ideas are important in defining what we as Americans do and feel.
- **B.** The power which freedom wields as an idea can be illustrated by the impact of John F. Kennedy's Inaugural Address. The main theme of address was the idea of liberty, and the words "free" and "freedom" are repeated over and over again.

II. Freedom is not exclusively American or Western. The idea has deep roots in India and Nepal

- **A.** About 1000 BC, the Indian Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita set forth a dual idea of freedom defined in two senses.
  - **1.** Both meanings are contained in the word swaraj, which derives from "raj" meaning to rule over, and "swa" meaning one's own.
  - **2.** The philosophers conceived of swaraj in a strict political sense of rule over one's own land.
  - **3.** Swaraj was also understood in a spiritual or psychological sense of rule over one's soul or self.
- **B.** The second meaning should be taken to understand that through self-knowledge, one acquires freedom from ignorance, illusion, and fear.
  - **1.** Therefore, one was unfree if obsessed with money or possessions. The Bhagavad Gita says that the truly free person acts without craving.
  - **2.** The highest level of consciousness is learning that our being is at one with all beings, and spiritual liberation comes from unity with all beings. Understanding of unity brings liberation from alienation, divisiveness, and fear.
  - **3.** The freest person sees all beings in himself, and himself in all beings.
- **C.** Swaraj is a paradigm - freedom in both internal and external sense. The duality of freedom (political and spiritual, internal and external) will be found in later philosophers to come.

III. In ancient Greece, freedom had both physical and spiritual meanings.

- **A.** In the writings of Greek historian Thucydides about the Peloponnesian war, the funeral oration of Pericles expounds the Athenian democracy of the 5th century B.C.
  - **1.** In contrast to oppressive states of Sparta, Athenians were free and tolerant in their public and private lives.
  - **2.** Pericles called the city "the apostle of freedom and an education to all of Greece."
  - **3.** The liberal/external idea of freedom is the key to what Pericles and most Greeks thought of freedom.
- **B.** When the Greek philosopher Plato wrote the *Republic*, Athens had already begun decline.
  - **1.** Plato believed the decline could be attributed to they way in which democracy defined freedom.
  - **2.** Plato had been disillusioned about the Athenian system when his mentor and friend Socrates was executed.
  - **3.** Athens was at the time a remarkable civilization, but Plato condemned exactly what Pericles had claimed as Athens' finest product: democracy.
- **C.** Athenian democracy differed greatly from the American conception of democracy.
  - **1.** Athens was a small democracy of 360,000 people that relied heavily on slave labor.
  - **2.** 40,000 men of the citizen class were the only ones who could exercise political rights.

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3. However, Athens was the first democratic system at all and could claim a direct democracy whose citizens had a high level of involvement in public affairs.

D. Plato saw two main symptoms that caused him to condemn Athenian democracy.
1. Plato believed that the Peloponnesian war, which devastated Greece, was caused by Athens' arrogance, and that in a democracy, people often supported war for economic reasons.
2. The execution of Socrates devastated Plato. He criticized democracy as a system perpetually ruled by a short-sighted majority, manipulated by small group of demagogues or politicians.
3. Plato wanted to institute a meritocracy, whereby individuals would rule based on achievement rather than popularity.
4. His metaphor of the Ship of State expresses the chaos of rule of the masses.

IV. The third view of freedom was the Christian view.

A. Four hundred years after Plato, Christ expounded a philosophy of spiritual freedom.
1. This philosophy imbues Biblical statements such as "ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free," and "whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin."
2. Christian philosophy was further developed by St. Augustine, who wrote "the will is truly free when it is not the slave of vices, passions and sins."

B. Like Plato and the Hindi philosophers, Christ believed in two forms of freedom .
1. Freedom in a social or political sense was not what concerned him.
2. The second form of freedom depended on knowledge of a moral or spiritual truth, which was a religious truth. This truth led to freedom from sin, ignorance, and fear.

V. Conceptions of freedom in the ancient world differ, but there are many similarities.

A. All three (Indian, Greek, and Christian) distinguish between lower and higher forms of freedom.
1. There is a greater freedom than simply acting as one wishes.
2. The higher freedom comes after transcending one's addiction to material possessions.

B. There is always a tension between the democratic form of freedom, and social responsibility.

Recommended Reading:

Plato. *The Republic.*

Supplemental Reading:

Thucydides. *History of the Peloponnesian War*. (Pericles' Funeral Oration)

Questions to Consider:

1. Do the safeguards of freedom built into the American system resolve any of the problems Plato had with the Athenian republic?
2. Upon which of the three ancient philosophies of freedom does the American idea of freedom draw the most heavily?

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Lecture Two
The Advent of Freedom in the Modern World

Scope: The foundations of the modern world's tradition of freedom were established by John Locke in seventeenth-century England and by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in eighteenth-century France. Each created an intricate system of thought, but neither was removed from the political turmoil and radical change going on around them. This lecture will compare and contrast Locke's and Rousseau's philosophies of freedom and relate them to the ancient philosophies previously discussed. Both Locke's idea of the government's legitimacy through social contract, and Rousseau's blending of liberty and equality, have had great impact on the reality of American government today.

Outline

I. The philosophies of John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau established the foundations of freedom in the modern world.

- **A.** John Locke was influenced by the middle-class struggle for freedom in England which found expression in English Revolution of 1688.
- **B.** Jean-Jacques Rousseau influenced the French Revolution of 1789.
- **C.** Locke more than Rousseau influenced American Revolution of 1776. Jefferson praised Locke's as most perfect system of thought he had found.

II. John Locke's key text is his Second Treatise of Government, which was published in 1689.

- **A.** Locke's system of thought connected his idea of liberty with the social contract and private property.
  - **1.** Locke differentiated between the natural liberty of man and the liberty of man under government. In the state of nature there was complete freedom. Because of the human tendency toward social conflict, government was established.
  - **2.** Liberty under law is established as the result of a free contract among individuals in society.
  - **3.** Man cannot by contract or by his own consent, enslave himself to another. Freedom is not being subjugated to the arbitrary will of another.
  - **4.** The end of law is to preserve and enlarge freedom. Man has freely entered into a contract for his own safety and peace, which legitimizes law and government.
- **B.** Locke adds to the idea of liberty the crucial concept of property, which included both physical property and life itself.
  - **1.** The concern of individuals must be to ensure property. Locke was arguing for middle-class landowners against the King and his arbitrary power.
  - **2.** Locke thought that Parliament, as a body of interested and rational landowners, could be counted on to dispense justice and preserve peace in defense of property.
  - **3.** Locke also believed that the Parliament could be counted on to preserve religious liberty.
- **C.** Locke's arguments for liberty sound familiar today, but he believed that one must choose between liberty and equality.
  - **1.** Locke's argument that any government which did not admit to the principles of freedom ceased to be legitimate especially appealed to Thomas Jefferson.
  - **2.** However, Locke's belief in the right to accumulation of property led him to a justification of economic inequality.
  - **3.** Freedom in this formulation was inconsistent with equality, since people were unequal in their abilities.
  - **4.** However, without economic power to freely acquire property, how free can all people be under Locke's system?

III. Rousseau, a century later, in the classic text *The Social Contract* contended that liberty could not subsist without equality.

- **A.** The Social Contract anticipated watchwords of the French revolution: liberty, fraternity, equality.
  - **1.** Rousseau was influenced by Locke's idea of the social contract, but he questioned the rules of that contract.

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2. He wrote a brilliant denunciation of slavery and contended that we are all socialized into slavery, in a return to Plato's ideal of spiritual freedom.
3. The act of domination involves a relationship of inequality, which is a source of bondage to master and slave alike.

B. Rousseau believed that a free and equal society may be achieved through a social contract that allows us to realize our sense of community or the "general will."

1. One scholar uses the concept of the traffic light as an illustration of the general will in practice.
2. Rousseau differentiated between the freedom to act and moral freedom, which he saw as an understanding of the general will.
3. Moral freedom means knowing ourselves and being in control of ourselves and our passions.
4. Rousseau went beyond the Indian philosophers by contending that moral freedom demands social equality and the socialization of private property.
5. Individuals should be forced by law to contribute to the general good.

C. Rousseau has defined his own solution for the ills of modern society.

1. In his ideal community, individuals are socialized into freedom by attaining an understanding of the general will.
2. In this utopia, man would voluntarily will what is willed by those whom he loves, and his interests would in all things be conformable to the general will.
3. We would then have liberty and equality, since no individual would wish to dominate another.

IV. Although both philosophers were revolutionary, the scope of their visions differed.

A. Locke envisioned a revolution that would bring about a new supreme Parliament and would guarantee external freedom, but not freedom with equality.

B. Rousseau believed that a change of system was not adequate: a change of human nature was required. Natural liberty must be transformed into moral freedom so each man could be truly the master of himself.

Recommended Reading:

Locke, John. *Two Treatises of Government.*

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *The Social Contract*.

Supplemental Reading:

Charles M. Sherover. *Time, Freedom and the Common Good: An Essay in Public Philosophy.*

Questions to Consider:

1. Does Rousseau resolve the tension between democratic freedom and social responsibility?
2. What inferences can be drawn about the visions of human nature which Locke and Rousseau had?

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Lecture Three
Hegel's Philosophy of Freedom, God and the State

Scope: Nineteenth-century Europe was sharply divided in terms of political thought. One of the two most prominent theorists of the time, G.W.F. Hegel, developed a philosophy that revolutionized thinking about man's freedom. Hegel was the first philosopher to surmise that the will of God alone was determining the course of history, and that aiding a state's quest for power and greatness was the only way for an individual to achieve a higher freedom. This philosophy had an enormous influence on nationalism, especially German nationalism, at a crucial period in that nation's history.

Outline

I. The 19th century in Europe saw an extraordinary burst of political thought, especially on the topic of freedom.

- **A.** Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel was one of the two most prominent and influential theorists of the time. Hegel belonged to a clearly defined school of political thought, which conceived of freedom as liberation from ignorance or illusion, achieved by gaining a form of higher knowledge.
- **B.** Hegel's work sharply contrasted with the ideas of John Stuart Mill. This opposing school of political philosophy concentrated on external freedom.
- **C.** The two schools clashed especially when it came to resolving the relationship between freedom and authority. Hegel's school welcomed authority, whereas Mill's was suspicious of it.

II. Hegel built on the philosophies of Plato, Christianity, and Rousseau. His idea of freedom, as stated in *The Philosophy of History,* begins with a conception of God.

- **A.** Hegel studied in a theological university, and although he chose to become a professor of philosophy at the University of Berlin, he remained involved in religious speculation.
  - **1.** His treatise opens with a statement of belief that a divine Providence and wisdom presides over the events and circumstances of the world, and that the history of the world is God's grand plan.
  - **2.** Hegel saw people as free only inasmuch as we can divine our roles in God's plan for humanity and act accordingly. Otherwise, we would remain slaves to the illusion of our own mastery.
  - **3.** Human beings were divided into essence, which is divine, and existence, which is matter. The task of human beings is to realize our essence, but alienation occurs when we are consumed with existence.
- **B.** Freedom for Hegel is a state of the highest consciousness, a capacity that enables us to know God in history and overcome self-alienation.
  - **1.** This freedom must be acquired through a long process including obedience to law and observance of morality.
  - **2.** Hegel believed that the capacity to understand our role in God's plan had grown throughout history, and that only in the Christian society could our ability be fully realized.
  - **3.** The statement of Christ that "the truth shall set you free" heralded the development of philosophy. It is the essence of Hegel's drive to seek the truth of God's will for humanity.
  - **4.** Negative freedom, or the license of selfish desires, was distinguished from positive freedom which could be attained only by exercising our God-given freedom to know the truth.

III. Hegel's idea of freedom is multi-faceted and relates directly to his idea of the state.

- **A.** Hegel's early work focused on the individual, but his later work construed the conflict of alienation as taking place between states.
  - **1.** Only the states deemed worthy by God will grow to great political and military power.
  - **2.** The march of history (God's plan for the world) is carried on by states and their actions.
  - **3.** Conflict was a way for individuals to overcome alienation , as members of a state carrying out a divine duty. In fact, the individuals belonged to the state as to an organic body.
  - **4.** All the value that the individual has is as a member of a state. This notion became a crucial element in the theory and practice of nationalism.

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B. Hegel examined great empires in history in order to examine God's design in history. A historian could determine which had been chosen by God by studying who prevailed in conflict.
   1. He found that certain leaders of great states served to further God's purpose and realization.
   2. Hegel believed that these "world historical individuals" who were both political and military leaders, advanced God's plan for their state by furthering their state's power.
   3. These heroes were, in particular, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, and Napoleon.
   4. They were capable of arousing to consciousness the spirit of their peoples and made them aware of the irresistible power of this spirit.
   5. Hegel's heroes are charismatic leaders whom Hegel excuses from everyday morality, another theory that found its place in German nationalism.

IV. Hegel explicitly calls his philosophy the idea of freedom, to which he indeed made unique contributions.
   A. Hegel's idea of freedom as the unfolding of God's purpose in history was unprecedented.
   B. The theory and practice of nationalism owed much to Hegel as well. He recognized the state as the divinely-sanctioned agent of human progress and freedom.

Recommended Reading:

Hegel, G.W.F. *The Philosophy of History*.

Supplemental Reading:

Taylor, Charles. *Hegel*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What if any similarity does the Hegelian idea of the individual's relationship to the state, bear to the Hindu philosophy of swaraj?
2. Have there been any "heroes" in the Hegelian sense, since the time of his writings?

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Lecture Four
John Stuart Mill's Philosophy of Freedom

Scope: The nineteenth-century English philosopher John Stuart Mill defined the meaning of freedom with extraordinary clarity and precision. His text *On Liberty*, published in 1806, may be one of the most influential texts in defining freedom as understood by most Americans. Mill was a pioneer in the struggle to defend the rights of the individual and of women. His sweeping defense of free expression and his distrust of the "tyranny of the majority" have helped to define our own political culture, and they are reflected in numerous Supreme Court decisions.

Outline

I. The English theorist John Stuart Mill is identified with the defense of freedom, especially due to the enduring influence of his work *On Liberty*.

- **A.** Although Mill was concerned with the same subject as Hegel and wrote only a few decades later, he has a nearly opposite interpretation of the philosophy of freedom. He is especially concerned with the "tyranny of the majority"—i.e., the limitations that social majorities can impose upon individual freedom.
- **B.** Mill's England was characterized by a Victorian code of morality that stifled freedom of behavior and expression. Mill's childhood, during which he was under his father's complete control, gave him a special passion for liberty.
- **C.** Mill's friendship with his future wife brought him out of a deep depression and inspired many of his ideas on liberty and on the subjugation of women.

II. *On Liberty*, according to Mill, was aimed at championing diversity and opposing restrictive social conventions.

- **A.** The problem Mill sought to remedy was the attempt by society to force individuals to conform to a code of conduct that might be irrational. His solution was to preserve and enlarge the realm of individual freedom.
  - **1.** The tyranny of the majority (social oppression) is more formidable than political oppression, since it penetrates more deeply into an individual's life.
  - **2.** Mill's goal is to determine the limit beyond which the interference of collective opinion with individual independence cannot be legitimate.
  - **3.** In his view, an individual's freedom can be restricted only for the sake of preventing injury to another.
  - **4.** Among the freedoms that Mill wanted to ensure were freedom of thought, opinion, conscience, and eccentric preferences.
- **B.** Much of *On Liberty* is concerned with the defense of free expression of ideas. Mill believed that to silence opinion and ideas was to deprive posterity of the opportunity to explore the truth. He outlined three cases in which the question of oppressing dissent might arise.
  - **1.** If the dissenting opinion is true, such as the opinions of Galileo or Socrates, then there can be no justification for suppressing it, since society has an interest in learning the truth.
  - **2.** When the dissenting opinion is false, as in the case of bigotry, then the falsehood must be exposed to public view in order to expose it as false and to reaffirm the truth which it contradicts.
  - **3.** The most frequent case is that of several conflicting opinions, any of which might be true. In this case, it is essential to maintain free expression so that society can learn to discern truth in conflicting opinion.
- **C.** Mill saw truth as evolving from the free competition of opinion.
  - **1.** The Millian idea of pursuit of truth through a process of intellectual conflict was opposed to the Hegelian conception of a truth possessed.
  - **2.** Liberals such as Mill looked for truth in the process, and sought to maintain a healthy process.
  - **3.** Mill, as opposed to Hegel or Marx, did not set forth the actual truth in his work, but rather the process by which it could be achieved.

III. The Millian theory of liberty and truth has formed the basis of many important documents in the United States, and it has informed many opinions of the U.S. Supreme Court.

- **A.** Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes expressed Millian views in *Skenk v. the United States*.

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1. Skenk was accused of distributing subversive materials to men awaiting induction into the U.S. army during World War I.
2. Holmes ruled that this action did harm to the United States in wartime. He added that the character of an act depends upon the circumstances in which it is done.

B. In *Abrams v. the United States*, Holmes wrote another powerful defense of free speech.
1. Abrams was a Russian anarchist who distributed leaflets condemning the United States (after World War I had ended).
2. Holmes wrote that we must be "vigilant against attempts to check the expression of opinions that we loathe."

C. In U.*S. v. Schwimmer*, Holmes defended free speech once more by declaring that our constitution demands "freedom of thought for the thought that we hate."

Recommended Reading:

Mill, John Stuart. *On Liberty.*

Supplemental Reading:

Mill, John Stuart. *Autobiography*

Mill, John Stuart. *The Subjection of Women.*

Questions to Consider:

1. Does the sanctity of Millian individual freedom interfere with the social responsibility required in democratic nations?
2. Can harm in a Millian sense be also understood as harm to the fabric of society?

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Lecture Five
Emma Goldman and the Anarchist Idea of Freedom

Scope: Emma Goldman was the most articulate anarchist of the twentieth century, an extraordinary theorist who refined the principles of anarchism and used them to address the issue of liberation of women as well as men. Her brutal childhood instilled in her not only a hatred of authority and a love of equality, but the utmost belief in the power of early upbringing to bring out the best in human nature. Although not regarded today as an American hero in most circles, Goldman was a passionate advocate for the freedom of humanity from oppressive authority and a prophet of the downfall of Soviet communism.

Outline

I. The anarchist Emma Goldman addressed the issue of liberation of all people.

A. The concerns of the twentieth century were influenced by the nineteenth-century philosophies of nationalism, liberalism, and anarchism.

1. Anarchists reject the entire system of government as authoritarian and hierarchical. They demand a revolution to overturn the establishment, especially the class structure.

2. The main principle of anarchism is resistance to authority, because it deprives us of freedom of expression and belief.

B. Emma describes in her autobiography her brutal childhood, which instilled in her the desire to rebel.

1. She experienced frequent beatings at the hands of her sadistic father.

2. Her experience with early education added to her disdain for authority.

C. At age eighteen, Goldman attended a speech in defense of anarchists.

1. Her discovery of anarchism was accompanied by a new friendship with the activist.

2. By the turn of the century, she had become a radical free thinker and an eloquent proponent of anarchism in America.

II. Anarchist theory may be expressed in terms of three main principles, as Goldman set them forth in her writings.

A. Human nature is a common principle among anarchists.

1. It is a flexible, dynamic entity that is subject to change.

2. It is not innately aggressive, but a cooperative spirit that could be nurtured in early childhood upbringing so that government authority is unnecessary.

3. Anarchism wanted to reinforce the values of mutual aid and social harmony.

B. Freedom was a supreme anarchist value.

1. Anarchists believe in the necessary relationship between freedom and equality.

2. Positive freedom meant the liberty for men and women to have the power to take advantage of an opportunity.

3. Goldman rejected the Hegelian ideal of collective freedom and state authority.

4. She also rejected the liberal, Millian conception of freedom because it did not embrace equality for all.

5. Although a champion of human liberation, Goldman was especially concerned with the plight of women and children, and she went to jail for teaching about birth control.

C. The relationship of means to ends became a central principle in Goldman's thought after she was deported to the Soviet Union.

1. Goldman was disillusioned with what she called Lenin's hateful dictatorship, and she fled to Europe.

2. Her indictment of Soviet communism charged that the Bolsheviks had enslaved the Russian people, and that they cared nothing for freedom.

3. She said that the Bolsheviks were prepared to use any means at all to attain their ends. The "fatal flaw"of Bolshevism was its belief that "the end justifies all means."

4. Goldman asserted that any attempt to change the human condition must make as its "first ethical precept the identity of means used and aims sought."

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Essential Reading:

Goldman, Emma. *Anarchism and Other Essays.*

Supplementary Reading:

Falk, Candace Serena. *Love, Anarchy and Emma Goldman.*

Goldman, Emma. *Living My Life* (vols. 1&2).

Questions to Consider:

1. Did Emma Goldman present a harm to society in a Millian sense?
2. Has anarchism been justifiably relegated to the fringe of modern American political thought?

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Lecture Six
Mahatma Gandhi: Personal and Political Freedom

Scope: Mahatma Gandhi was an original thinker, an activist, and a political leader who led the Indian subcontinent out of British domination using methods of nonviolent resistance and a philosophy of fearlessness. One of the most revered men of our century, Gandhi's philosophy emerged out of the violence of Indian uprising, and it effected a miraculous transformation of that nation into one of strength and resolve. He taught that the world has become addicted to violence as a way of solving problems, and that it is time to break the cycle. Perhaps more than any other leader of our time, Gandhi showed how we can give peace a chance.

Outline

I. Mahatma Gandhi was not only one of the most original thinkers of our era, but he was the leader of a movement that used his philosophy of freedom: the Indian independence movement.

- **A.** Gandhi's philosophy of freedom drew upon tradition, especially the ancient Indian philosophy of swaraj.He interpreted swaraj for modern India:
  - **1.** This philosophy encompassed political freedom for India from British rule.
  - **2.** It also taught a psychological freedom from ignorance and fear.
- **B.** The idea of freedom from fear was a key component of Gandhi's independence movement.
  - **1.** Jawaharlal Nehru (the first prime minister of India) described the impact that Gandhi's teaching of fearlessness and truth had upon the Indian people whom he led to victory in their quest for independence.
  - **2.** The change was a psychological one that liberated the people from violence and oppression.

II. Gandhi's philosophy of political freedom emerging from personal liberation was the result of his own life experience, which can be interpreted as a journey toward self-realization.

- **A.** Gandhi's primary identity was an outgrowth of his core values, formed early in life.
  - **1.** He was born in 1869 in a backwater, relatively untouched by British influence.
  - **2.** The influence of Hinduism and Jainism was strong in his life.
  - **3.** His mother was a devout Hindu. Gandhi claimed that she, not his father, served as his primary role model.
  - **4.** Gandhi was a member of the merchant caste, which ranked relatively low in the caste hierarchy.
- **B.** An emulative identity, or desire to imitate the British, was Gandhi's second stage of life.
  - **1.** Gandhi enrolled in a high school dominated by an English headmaster and an Anglicized curriculum.
  - **2.** Gandhi's infatuation for the British and his desire to leave India developed during his high school years.
  - **3.** In 1888 Gandhi went to England to take a law degree, and then he practiced law in India and South Africa.
- **C.** The emulative period ended in 1906, and the period of exclusivism began.
  - **1.** He was shocked by British racism during the Zulu rebellion and massacres in South Africa.
  - **2.** Repulsed by his new understanding of the dynamic of domination, he began civil disobedience.
  - **3.** His new philosophy of exclusivism was set forth in his first book *Hind Swaraj,* or *Indian Independence*.
  - **4.** He returned to India, took control of the Indian National Congress, and led the fight for independence.
- **D.** With the Amritsar Massacre in 1919, Gandhi was converted to a philosophy of inclusivism.
  - **1.** The massacre of nearly four hundred defenseless Indians by British troops caused uproar in the nation.
  - **2.** Indian terrorists moved to take over the nationalist movement, but Gandhi urged a nonviolent resistance.
  - **3.** Gandhi was able to prevail because his new philosophy made clear that the British had become dehumanized by their racism and hatred, and he called upon Indians to rise above such methods.
  - **4.** By nonviolent noncooperation, Indians demonstrated their strength and fearlessness.
  - **5.** Inclusivism even allowed Britons to become crucial members of the nonviolent movement.

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III. Gandhi's nonviolent inclusivism can offer some hope for a moral alternative to war, but it is at best a painstaking method of political change.

- **A.** Gandhi's method was much less successful when used to resolve religious conflict between Hindus and Muslims. He was unable to prevent the vast civil war that ended only with the assassination of Gandhi himself.
- **B.** Gandhi's Calcutta fast was a quintessential example of his inclusivist philosophy, and it has been called the greatest miracle of modern times.
  1. In 1947, religious fighting divided the city into armed camps that continued to butcher each other.
  2. Gandhi entered with the intention of keeping the Muslims in India and helping all India achieve freedom from fear.
  3. He announced that he would only eat when peace came to Calcutta. After a time, the people responded; at first slowly and then increasingly quickly.

Essential Reading:

Dalton, Dennis, ed. *Selected Political Writings of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*.

Supplementary Reading:

Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand. *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home-rule.*

Nehru, Jawaharlal. *Discovery of India*.

Questions to Consider:

1. In what ways do Gandhi's and Plato's philosophies resemble each other?
2. Did Gandhi's success in Calcutta depend upon his own personality, or was his example one that could be emulated in other situations of religious violence?

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Lecture Seven
Malcolm X's Quest for Liberation

Scope: Malcolm X was one of the most influential fighters in the struggle for civil rights in America. Though he is often associated with the violent separatist doctrines he preached as a young minister of the Nation of Islam, Malcolm underwent a conversion to inclusivism only a year before his assassination. His life journey can be compared with that of Gandhi, although the circumstances were very different. They were both leaders who pursued freedom in more than just political terms. Freedom, for Macolm, was a quest to liberate oneself spiritually in order to achieve political freedom

Outline

I. Malcolm X's life and thought, like those of Gandhi, can be interpreted as a continuing quest for liberation for self and for their people.

- **A.** Both quests were inspired by a fear of personal inadequacy wrought by racism. Racism can thus be seen to have a cross-cultural character.
- **B.** Both Gandhi and Malcolm X found ways to liberate themselves from others' and their own racism, through a journey which ended in the discovery of a truth.
- **C.** Both emerged as leaders of their people, and they brought their personal struggles for freedom into the struggles of their peoples for liberation.

II. As with Gandhi, the life of Malcolm X unfolded in stages of development and maturation.

- **A.** Malcolm's primary identity was formed by his parents' world-view.
  - **1.** His father, a vocal advocate of Marcus Garvey's philosophy, was murdered when Malcolm was only six.
  - **2.** As a child, he was fearful of the power of racism over him, as embodied by the Ku Klux Klan..
  - **3.** His family was preoccupied with skin color, and he emerged ambivalent over his own racial identity.
- **B.** Malcolm's second stage involved attempts to win approval from the white community.
  - **1.** Malcolm was an avid student in school, and tried to live up to the demands of his white teachers.
  - **2.** In eighth grade, however, he was bitterly disillusioned by a teacher who discouraged him from pursuing a law career on the basis of his skin color.
  - **3.** Nonetheless, Malcolm continued his emulative stage by trying to appear lighter by lightening and straightening his hair.
- **C.** Malcolm's journey led him into separatism through the Nation of Islam.
  - **1.** In prison for burglary in 1948, he converted to Islam and learned the history of black separatism.
  - **2.** A lifetime of dehumanization by white culture made the doctrine of hatred of whites particularly logical and inspiring to Malcolm.
  - **3.** While in prison, he acquired an impressive self-education, which following his release in 1952 took him to the position of Elijah Mohammed's leading minister.
  - **4.** Malcolm consolidated an exclusivist ideology over the next twelve years. He preached this doctrine across America with growing success. His doctrine denounced whites as demonic and embraced radicalism.
- **D.** The final stage of Malcolm's development was a move to inclusivism.
  - **1.** In 1964, Malcolm became disillusioned with the leadership of the Nation of Islam and left the movement.
  - **2.** During his subsequent self-examination, he cast off the fanatic ideology of the Nation of Islam.
  - **3.** He journeyed to Mecca on a pilgrimage. While on that pilgrimage, he discovered that not all whites practiced racism, and he became a humanist.
  - **4.** His assassination at age 39 ended his one-year career of preaching inclusivism.

IV. Although Malcolm X is not usually remembered for his final inclusive philosophy, he was not granted the same amount of time during his final stage of life as was, for example, Gandhi.

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A. Just before his assassination, Malcolm expressed his joy at being free from the madness of his separatist years.

B. In a eulogy for Malcolm, his friend Ossie Davis conveyed the great distance Malcolm had traveled. Once a virulent racist, Malcolm had managed to completely abandon separatism and hatred by the time of his death.

C. When he was a minister of the Nation of Islam, Malcolm believed he possessed the truth. After his departure from the Nation, he expressed his belief that he was simply in pursuit of the truth.

Essential Reading:

Malcolm X. *The Last Speeches*

Supplementary Reading:

Malcolm X. *the Authobiography of Malcolm X.*

Questions to Consider:

1. Does his refusal to disavow violence make Malcolm's comparison with Gandhi impossible?

2. Should Malcolm be remembered as a preacher of separatism, or for his late spiritual transformation?

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Lecture Eight

Lecture Eight: Martin Luther King, Jr.: Stride Toward Freedom

Scope: Martin Luther King, Jr., in his struggle for civil rights in the United States, synthesized the teachings of Christ and Mahatma Gandhi to create a method of nonviolent resistance that carried Americans toward justice during the turbulent years of the 1950s and 1960s. King's life and legacy are an excellent topic with which to review how far the philosophy of freedom has come. Once the province of academics, it now inspires activists and political leaders in nonviolent struggle.

Outline

I. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in 1968 when he was only thirty-nine, but he made such a deep impression on our country's consciousness that we have named a national holiday in his honor. He described his life's struggle for freedom in the book *Stride for Freedom*, from which the lecture takes its title.

II. King's work was very concerned with freedom. It made use of the concept of freedom in three ways.

- **A.** A Baptist minister, King used freedom in the way that Christ had understood it—i.e., spiritual freedom.
  - **1.** He often said that "the truth will set you free."
  - **2.** King thought that humankind's unity as children of God would set men free from the sin of separation and segregation.
  - **3.** King applied Christian doctrines of spiritual freedom to American race relations.
- **B.** King used the idea of freedom in a secular sense as well.
  - **1.** It was an echo of the modern, liberal, democratic principles of Locke and Mill.
  - **2.** The phrase "tyranny of the majority" had significant meaning in King's struggle for freedom in the United States.
  - **3.** King seized on the connection between freedom and justice, and he insisted upon the application of the justice in our democratic heritage to real conditions in contemporary America.
- **C.** King also conceived of freedom in the Gandhian sense of swaraj.
  - **1.** King learned from Gandhi the philosophy of freedom as connected with nonviolent power.
  - **2.** King discusses his intellectual development and the influence of Gandhi's teachings in *Stride Toward Freedom.*
  - **3.** This philosophy was the inspiration for the Montgomery bus boycott.

III. The Montgomery bus boycott began King's leadership of the civil rights movement.

- **A.** This crisis, which occurred in Montgomery while King was a pastor there, provided an ideal opportunity for the application of Gandhi's philosophy.
  - **1.** A successful use of nonviolence required the people's willingness.
  - **2.** More than just a common aim, the idea of Christian love inspired the people.
  - **3.** There was also open communication between the people and the leadership of the protest.
- **B.** The experience of the protest cemented King's belief in loving nonviolence as a way of life.
  - **1.** About a week after the protest began, a white woman wrote a letter to her local newspaper comparing the protest to Gandhi's movement in India.
  - **2.** King noted that this series of letters inspired him, in turn, to view his leadership in terms of Gandhi's work.
- **C.** Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat on a Montgomery bus to a white person was a protest for justice and the spark which ignited the boycott of city buses.
  - **1.** The boycott was marked by nearly full participation by the blacks of Montgomery.
  - **2.** King, as president of the Montgomery Improvement Association, gave what he called "the most important speech of my life."
  - **3.** He exhorted the blacks to demand justice and to be guided by the deepest principles of their Christian faith.
  - **4.** After a year of protest, the U.S. Supreme Court declared Alabama's laws on segregation unconstitutional.

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IV. In his *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, King expounds his theory of nonviolence as connected to his struggle for freedom.

- **A.** The letter shows how he reconciled his actions in breaking the law and going to jail with his teachings of law and order. He had to carefully distinguish the laws that he broke from what he called the highest law of the land.
- **B.** He argued that an unjust law is no law at all, as St. Aquinas said. A just law was one that squared with moral law, and an unjust law degraded human personality.
- **C.** Segregation laws give the segregator a false sense of superiority, and the segregated a false sense of inferiority. Therefore they were morally wrong.

Essential Reading:

King, Martin Luther Jr., *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story*.

Supplementary Reading:

King, Martin Luther, Jr. *I Have a Dream: Twenty-four Writings and Speeches that Changed the World*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Is King's embrace of nonviolence impossible to reconcile with Malcom X's rejection of it, in the struggle for the same cause?
2. Can King's philosophy and methods be successfully applied to smaller-scale struggles for liberation?

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Timeline
The History of the Philosophy of Freedom

431-404 BC.....Peloponnesian War

428 BC.....Birth of Plato

399 BC.....Trial and execution of Socrates

1650.....First British trading post established in India, near Calcutta

1688.....James II of England flees to France during Civil War

1689.....Bill of Rights accepted by English monarchs William and Mary

1690.....*Treatise on Civil Government* by Locke is published

1762.....*The Social Contract* by Rousseau is published

1770.....Birth of G.W.F. Hegel

1806.....Birth of John Stuart Mill

1859.....Publication of *On Liberty* by Mill

1869.....Birth of Emma Goldman

1869.....*On the Subjugation of Women* by Mill is published

1893.....Emma Goldman imprisoned for first time

1919.....Goldman is deported to Russia

1923.....*My Disillusionment in Russia* by Emma Goldman is published.

8/15, 1947.....India and Pakistan achieve independence from Britain

1947.....Rioting and bloodshed in Calcutta; Gandhi's Calcutta fast

1/30, 1948.....Gandhi assassinated by a Hindu fanatic

1955.....Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott.

1956.....Supreme Court rules Alabama bus segregation unconstitutional

1960.....American Congress for Racial Equality

11/22, 1963.....John F. Kennedy assassinated

1964-67.....Riots in black ghettoes of Harlem, Detroit and Newark

4/4, 1965.....Malcolm X assassinated

1968.....Martin Luther King, Jr. assassinated

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Glossary

Anarchism: The theory that all forms of government and coercive authority are oppressive and should be abolished.

Bhagavad Gita: A Sanskrit poem of 700 verses which is regarded by most Hindus as their essential religious text.

Caste: Four major hereditary classes into which Hindu society is divided.

Exclusivism: An ideology which promotes the exclusion of an undesirable culture from coming into contact with, and thus corrupting, another culture.

Inclusivism: An ideology which recognizes that including all cultures or classes in an effort will best enable it to succeed.

Peloponnesian War: A conflict between the allies of Athens and those of Sparta, which took place between 31 and 404 BC, ending in Spartan supremacy in Greece.

Swaraj: Literally, "self-rule" in Sanskrit, an ancient Indian philosophy of dual freedom, both political and spiritual.

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Biographical Notes

Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand (1869-1948). This beloved Indian spiritual and political leader was born in Porbandar, India, and educated in law at University College in London. After practicing law in South Africa, he became a political activist for Indian independence, drawing on ancient traditions and nonviolent methods. He led India to independence from Britain, and at the time of his assassination, was a revered holy man, or Mahatma.

Goldman, Emma (1869-1940). A Russian anarchist, Goldman was born in the Kovno and emigrated to the United States in 1885. She soon became the eloquent leader of the American anarchist community. Frequently imprisoned for acts of civil disobedience, she was deported to the Soviet Union in 1919. The author of several works on anarchism, she died in Toronto.

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1770-1831). A German idealist philosopher born in Stuttgart, Hegel studied theology but chose to become a professor of philosophy, eventually at the University of Berlin. One of the most influential German philosophers at the time of his death, he profoundly impacted future philosophy as well as European nationalism.

King, Martin Luther, Jr. (1929-1968). An American clergyman and Nobel Peace prize recipient, King was born in Atlanta and became a Baptist minister by the age of seventeen. Influenced by the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, King led the campaign for black civil rights in the 1950's and 60's, using methods of nonviolent civil disobedience. He was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee.

Locke, John (1632-1704). An English philosopher born in Somerset, Locke was educated and taught at Oxford University early in his career. As he became more political, his work attacked the notion of the divine right of kings, and argued for the sovereignty of Parliament and the people. He had a profound impact on modern philosophy, not least in his ideas about the separation of church and state.

Malcolm X (1925-1965). Born Malcolm Little in Omaha, Nebraska, the future black leader converted to Islam in 1948 while in jail. Shortly after he was released, he became the primary spokesman for the Nation of Islam and a violent racist ideology. In 1963 he renounced his ties to the Nation and eventually to racism as well. Shortly after embracing a more inclusivist ideology, he was assassinated.

Mill, John Stuart (1806-1873). This English political theorist was born in London and received an extensive, advanced education from his father at an early age. Considered a radical in Parliament for his work to improve the conditions of working people and his position on the rights of women, Mill heavily influenced American ideas of liberty.

Plato (ca. 428-347 BC). A Greek philosopher born in Athens who became a disciple of Socrates. After his mentor's death, Plato founded the Academy in Athens, and wrote many works on political theory especially concerned with justice and the just state. He had a monumental impact on all later philosophy, including the development of early Christian theology.

Rousseau, Jean Jacques (1712-1778) A prominent thinker of the Age of Enlightenment, Rousseau helped prepare the background for the French Revolution with his works on civil liberty and equality. He has been interpreted both as a pioneer for the rights of the individual, and as one of the forefathers of totalitarianism.

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Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand. *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home-rule.* Canton, ME: Greenleaf Books, 1981. Gandhi's first major book, on the burning subject of Indian independence.

Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand. Dennis Dalton, ed. *Selected Political Writings.* Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997. The professor's own collection of the most influential political writings of the Mahatma.

Goldman, Emma. *Anarchism and Other Essays.* Mineola, NY: Dover, 1970. The essential Emma Goldman.

Goldman, Emma. *Living My Life* (vols. 1&2). Mineola, NY: Dover, 1930. A long project, but one which gives great insight into the background of her anarchist philosophy.

Hegel, G.W.F. *The Philosophy of History*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1990. Not an easy read, but the ambitious work which gives the history of the world a conceptual framework is worth the time.

King, Martin Luther, Jr. *I Have a Dream: Twenty-four Writings and Speeches that Changed the World*. New York: Harper, 1992. As suggested by the title, an invaluable collection of King's inspiring and challenging thoughts.

King, Martin Luther Jr., *Stride Toward Freedom: the Montgomery Story*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986. The Story of the Montgomery bus boycott, in King's own moving words.

Locke, John. *Two Treatises of Government.* New York: Cambridge Univeristy Press, 1988. The seminal defense of private property and legislative supremacy.

Malcolm X. *the Authobiography of Malcolm X.* New York: Ballantine, 1987. Malcolm's own description of his fight for the freedom of his people.

Malcolm X. *The Last Speeches.* New York: Pathfinder, 1989. The eloquent speeches which chronicle Malcolm's last stage on his journey toward personal liberation.

Mill, John Stuart. *Autobiography*. New York: Penguin, 1990. The story of a childhood of almost mythic proportions, and the personal experiences which shaped his philosophy.

Mill, John Stuart. *On Liberty.* New York: Viking Press, 1983. Perhaps the most well-known treatise on the subject of personal liberty, which so influenced American political formation.

Mill, John Stuart. *The Subjection of Women.* Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1986. An interesting, early take on feminism, from the "radical" of Parliament.

Nehru, Jawaharlal. *Discovery of India*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990. One of the most well-beloved and telling accounts of India and her struggle for independence, written while the author was in prison.

Plato. *The Republic.* New York: Viking Press, 1979. A seminal work in political theory, Plato's discussion of good government.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *The Social Contract*. New York: Free Press, 1970. The book in which one finds the seeds of the philosophy of the French Revolution, and an exposition of the idea of "the general will".

Sherover, Charles M. *Time, Freedom and the Common Good: An Essay in Public Philosophy.* New York: New York University Press, 1989. A prominent Rousseau scholar discusses his "traffic light" analogy to the idea of the general will.

Taylor, Charles. *Hegel*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977. A long but classic biography of the great philosopher.

Thucydides. *History of the Peloponnesian War*. New York: Viking Press, 1986. Perhaps the greatest example of ancient historical writing, this includes Pericles' 'Funeral Oration'.

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